

# Western Balkans Fact Sheet

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) | Last updated October 2024

## MEMBERS IN THE REGION

### Albania

+ Elbasan\* and Tirana

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

+ Modriča\* and Travnik\*

### Croatia

+ Zagreb\*

### Kosovo

+ Gjakova\* and Pristina\*

### Montenegro

+ Bar,\* Plav,\* and Žabljak\*

### North Macedonia

+ Kisela Voda\*

### Serbia

+ Novi Pazar

## AT A GLANCE

→ Total action plans: **29**

→ Total commitments: **544**

\* Indicates countries that have not yet submitted their first OGP action plan.

## COMMITMENT PERFORMANCE

The IRM assesses the design and implementation of all OGP commitments. While commitment ambition and early results in the Western Balkans are on par with the rest of Europe, the region lags behind Europe and other OGP countries in implementation.

	Western Balkans	OGP EU Average	OGP Europe Average	OGP Global Average
<b>High Ambition<sup>1</sup></b>	39%	37%	36%	40%
<b>High Completion<sup>2</sup></b>	52%	68%	65%	60%
<b>Strong Early Results<sup>3</sup></b>	21%	18%	18%	20%

## CURRENT ACTION PLANS

OGP countries in the Western Balkans are implementing commitments across a range of policy areas in their current action plans, such as anti-corruption, inclusion, and justice.

Country	Most Recent Action Plan	Noteworthy Areas of Work
<b>Albania</b>	2023-2025	Beneficial Ownership, Feedback Mechanisms, Inclusion
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	2022-2024	Open Data, Public Procurement, Budget Transparency
<b>Croatia</b>	2022-2024	Media Transparency, Data Protection, Anti-Corruption

<sup>1</sup> Commitments that are relevant to open government and have substantial potential for results.

<sup>2</sup> Commitments that were substantially or fully implemented by the end of the action plan period.

<sup>3</sup> Commitments that achieved major or outstanding changes in government openness.

<b>Kosovo</b>	2023-2025	Digital Transformation, Open Data, Political Transparency
<b>Montenegro</b>	2022-2024	Youth/e-Participation, Transparency of EU Funds
<b>North Macedonia</b>	2024-2026	Beneficial Ownership Registry, Public Participation, Climate Change
<b>Serbia</b>	2023-2027	Open Green Data, Digital Transformation

## CO-CREATION AND PARTICIPATION

OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) assesses compliance with the OGP Participation and Co-Creation Standards in its reporting. The table below summarizes the latest IRM assessments of compliance with certain OGP minimum requirements.

Country	Multistakeholder Forum <sup>4</sup>	Repository <sup>5</sup>	Reasoned Response <sup>6</sup>	Latest Assessed Action Plan
<b>Serbia</b>	●	●	●	2023-2025
<b>Albania</b>	●	●	●	2023-2025
<b>Croatia</b>	●	●	●	2022-2024
<b>Kosovo</b>	●	●	●	2023-2025
<b>Montenegro</b>	●	●	●	2022-2024
<b>North Macedonia</b>	●	●	●	2021-2023
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	●	●	●	2022-2024

Key: ● = Yes | ● = No

## OPEN GOV CHALLENGE

The [Open Gov Challenge](#) is a call to action for all OGP members to raise ambition in ten areas of open government to help strengthen our democracies. North Macedonia is the only Western Balkans country to submit a [commitment](#) to the Open Gov Challenge thus far (see box below). Five other countries in Europe have made 10 total commitments to the challenge. These commitments focus on anti-corruption, public participation, and access to information.

### North Macedonia Opens Beneficial Ownership Registry to the Public

In 2019, North Macedonia established a beneficial ownership registry to prevent corruption linked to companies with anonymous owners, which comprise about 70% of high-level corruption cases worldwide. However, this information is not publicly available. For this reason, in its 2024-2026 action plan, North Macedonia committed to publish the names of the beneficial owners of

<sup>4</sup> The multistakeholder forum is a space for ongoing dialogue between government, civil society, and the public.

<sup>5</sup> An OGP repository is an online centralized website where information and evidence related to the action plan are publicly stored, organized, updated and disseminated.

<sup>6</sup> The reasoned response standard ensures that governments are communicating back to stakeholders the ideas received and decisions made to provide genuine, high-quality conversation and, ultimately, greater buy-in of the action plan itself.



companies that receive public funding via concessions and contracts for public procurement and public-private partnerships. This commitment has the potential to help prevent and detect the misuse of public funds.

## ANTI-CORRUPTION

Countries in the Western Balkans have made almost 100 OGP commitments on anti-corruption. Many of these commitments have been related to anti-corrupt institutions, public procurement, and conflicts of interest.

● = made at least one commitment

★ = achieved strong early results

	OGP Commitment?	Most recent commitment(s) in this area
<b>Albania</b>	●	Beneficial Ownership and Open Contracting ( <a href="#">2023</a> )
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	●	Open Contracting and Anti-Corruption e-Platform ( <a href="#">2022</a> )
<b>Croatia</b>	★	Whistleblower Protections and Lobbying Regulations ( <a href="#">2022</a> )
<b>Kosovo</b>	●	Fully Open Public Procurement System ( <a href="#">2023</a> )
<b>Montenegro</b>	●	Whistleblower Protections and Integrity Standards ( <a href="#">2022</a> )
<b>North Macedonia</b>	●	Lobbying and Procurement Transparency ( <a href="#">2024</a> )
<b>Serbia</b>	★	Integrity Plans and Beneficial Ownership Transparency ( <a href="#">2020</a> )

### COMMITMENT EXAMPLES FROM THE REGION AND BEYOND



**Strengthening Anti-Corruption Frameworks in Croatia:** In its current OGP action plan, Croatia is implementing a commitment to adopt an action plan to combat corruption over the next three years, implementing the new Anti-Corruption Strategy 2021–2030. The commitment also seeks to introduce new legislation to regulate lobbying—a previously unregulated area. Civil society representatives will participate in the mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the commitment, primarily through the work of the Council for the Prevention of Corruption.



**Improving Beneficial Ownership Transparency in Armenia:** In April 2020, Armenia piloted its first beneficial ownership register in the extractives sector. Following its success, Armenia passed legislation in 2021 that requires companies across all economic sectors to submit information on their real owners to an open national registry. Now, Armenia is implementing a commitment to integrate public procurement and beneficial ownership data.

### RELATED RESOURCES



The 2023 [Open Gov Guide](#) – OGP’s go-to resource for detailed reform recommendations and examples of good practice from OGP members – features chapters on asset and interest disclosure, company beneficial ownership, lobbying, and open contracting.

**Partners:** OGP collaborates with many partners on anti-corruption reforms, including [Open Ownership](#), the [Open Contracting Partnership](#), [Transparency International](#), and the [International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance](#).

## CIVIC SPACE

Every OGP country in the Western Balkans has made at least one civic space commitment, most of which are related to the freedom of civil society organizations (CSOs). So far, these commitments have not yet achieved major results.

● = made at least one commitment

★ = achieved strong early results

	OGP Commitment?	Most recent commitment in this area
<b>Albania</b>	●	Establishing the Youth CSOs Database ( <a href="#">2023</a> )
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	●	Transparency of Media and CSO Funding ( <a href="#">2022</a> )
<b>Croatia</b>	●	Transparency of NGO Projects using Public Finances ( <a href="#">2022</a> )
<b>Kosovo</b>	●	Supporting Anti-SLAPP Campaigns ( <a href="#">2023</a> )
<b>Montenegro</b>	●	Improving Media Freedoms ( <a href="#">2012</a> )
<b>North Macedonia</b>	●	Open Data on Civil Society Organizations ( <a href="#">2021</a> )
<b>Serbia</b>	●	Transparency of Publicly Funded CSO Programs ( <a href="#">2023</a> )

### COMMITMENT EXAMPLES FROM THE REGION AND BEYOND



**Making Media and CSO Funding Transparent in Bosnia and Herzegovina:** In its current OGP action plan, Bosnia and Herzegovina committed to establishing voluntary criteria encouraging state institutions to proactively publish the amount and purpose of public funding allocated to media and CSOs. The commitment also aims to introduce voluntary criteria for recipients to publish the expenditure of allocated funds, with a clear explanation of those funds’ intended use. If voluntary uptake of these criteria is successful, these reforms could reduce misuse of funding and strengthen independence of CSO and media projects.



**Improving Civic Freedoms in Nigeria:** Need for civic space reform in Nigeria has escalated in recent years. In its current OGP action plan, Nigeria is committed to protecting the rights to free assembly, association, and expression. This includes setting clear registration requirements and processes for CSOs, holding citizen-police dialogues and developing guidelines for peaceful protests, and conducting dialogues on government surveillance.



## RELATED RESOURCES



The 2023 [Open Gov Guide](#) – OGP’s go-to resource for detailed reform recommendations and examples of good practice from OGP members – features chapters on mainstreaming participation and the freedoms of assembly, association, and expression.



**Partners:** OGP collaborates with many partners on civic space reforms, including [Article 19](#), [CIVICUS](#), the [International Center for Not-for-Profit Law](#), and [the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](#).

## CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

Several countries in the Western Balkans have made climate-related commitments. However, these commitments could be more ambitious and better implemented.

● = made at least one commitment  
★ = achieved strong early results

	OGP Commitment?	Most recent commitment(s) in this area
<b>Albania</b>	●	Electronic Monitoring System of Forests ( <a href="#">2016</a> )
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	●	Openness of Statistical Data ( <a href="#">2019</a> )
<b>Croatia</b>	★	Publication of Environmental Impact Studies ( <a href="#">2014</a> )
<b>Kosovo</b>	●	Online Reporting for Natural Disaster Damages ( <a href="#">2023</a> )
<b>Montenegro</b>	●	Transparency of EU Funds for Green Policies ( <a href="#">2022</a> )
<b>North Macedonia</b>	●	Promoting Information Access and Participation to Address Climate Change ( <a href="#">2024</a> )
<b>Serbia</b>	●	Open Green Data for Accessible Environmental Information ( <a href="#">2023</a> )

## COMMITMENT EXAMPLES FROM THE REGION AND BEYOND



**Transparency of Green Project Funds in Montenegro:** The EU has invested [€40 million](#) in environmental protection in Montenegro, such as improving waste management, air quality, habitat protection, and upgrading the sewage network. In its current OGP action plan, Montenegro committed to publishing information about green projects financed from European Union (EU) funds in a central, public database. In addition, the commitment involves trainings on EU green policies (including the European Green Deal), monthly “EU info days” for small and medium-sized entrepreneurs (SMEs), and trainings for SMEs on applying for EU funds.



**Green Transitions in Khmelnytskyi, Ukraine:** [Citizens helped shape](#) the city’s *Green City Action Plan* throughout its development. The plan was paused due to the Russian invasions,



but resumed work in June 2022. The plan grew to include a needs assessment for newly arrived internally displaced people. As a result, the plan prioritized improvement of the trolleybus fleet to improve mobility and air quality. The city began modernizing the trolleybus fleet in spring 2023.

## RELATED RESOURCES



The 2023 [Open Gov Guide](#) – OGP’s go-to resource for detailed reform recommendations and examples of good practice from OGP members – features a chapter on environmental democracy.



**Partners:** OGP collaborates with many partners on climate-related reforms, including the [World Resources Institute](#), the [Natural Resource Governance Institute](#), and the [Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative](#).

## DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

Most Western Balkans countries have yet to include digital governance reforms in their OGP action plans. Reforms in this area may address topics like algorithmic accountability, data privacy and protection, disinformation, and online civic space.

- = made at least one commitment
- ★ = achieved strong early results

	OGP Commitment?	Most recent commitment in this area
<b>Albania</b>		
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>		
<b>Croatia</b>	●	Training on Personal Data Protection ( <a href="#">2022</a> )
<b>Montenegro</b>		
<b>North Macedonia</b>		
<b>Serbia</b>		

## COMMITMENT EXAMPLES FROM THE REGION AND BEYOND



**Strengthening Personal Data Protection in Croatia:** To implement the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Croatia committed to training relevant public servants and officials on personal data protection and how to properly apply GDPR provisions. These training sessions will include detailed overviews of the legal foundations for processing personal data, the roles of controllers and processors, remedies, and potential liabilities and sanctions.





**Algorithmic Transparency in New Zealand:** Following months of information-gathering and public consultations, Statistics New Zealand released a voluntary Algorithm Charter for Aotearoa New Zealand, which gained 27 government agency signatories by October 2021. The Charter, published in both English and te Reo Māori, sets standards for safe and ethical use of algorithms by public-sector agencies and guidance for meeting transparency and accountability objectives. New Zealand is continuing to refine the Charter through its [2022-2024 OGP action plan](#).

## RELATED RESOURCES



The 2023 [Open Gov Guide](#) – OGP’s go-to resource for detailed reform recommendations and examples of good practice from OGP members – features a chapter on automated decision-making, algorithms, and artificial intelligence.



**Partners:** OGP collaborates with many partners on digital reforms, including [Access Now](#), the [Ada Lovelace Institute](#), and the [Open Data Charter](#). OGP also convenes the [Open Algorithms Network](#), an informal group of governments working on algorithmic accountability.

## JUSTICE

Several countries in the Western Balkans have made justice-related OGP commitments. North Macedonia, in particular, has achieved strong early results in this area, with 16 justice-related commitments in their previous two action plans.

● = made at least one commitment

★ = achieved strong early results

	OGP Commitment?	Most recent commitment(s) in this area
<b>Albania</b>	●	Public Awareness of Access to Justice Mechanisms ( <a href="#">2023</a> )
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>		
<b>Croatia</b>	●	Protection of Reporters of Irregularities/Whistleblowers ( <a href="#">2022</a> )
<b>Montenegro</b>	●	Efficient Collection of Administrative and Judicial Fees ( <a href="#">2018</a> )
<b>North Macedonia</b>	★	Digitization and Improvement of Legal Aid System ( <a href="#">2024</a> )
<b>Serbia</b>		

## COMMITMENT EXAMPLES FROM THE REGION AND BEYOND



**Improving Access to Justice in North Macedonia:** As part of its 2018-2020 OGP action plan, North Macedonia aimed to strengthen the legal framework around access to justice by adopting and implementing a new law and conducting a survey to identify major legal needs in the country and identify means of support. The new Law on Free Legal Aid – adopted in May 2019 – improved access to justice by lowering the criteria for obtaining legal assistance and allowing legal



aid for a variety of legal problems.



**Opening Court Decisions in the Czech Republic:** Prior to this commitment, only decisions of the three highest courts in the Czech Republic were published online, and decisions of lower courts were not publicly accessible. A ministerial decree enacted in July 2022 required the district, regional, and high courts to publish selected final decisions. Now, over 350,000 anonymized decisions from these courts have been made public in a database managed by the Ministry of Justice.

## RELATED RESOURCES



The 2023 [Open Gov Guide](#) – OGP’s go-to resource for detailed reform recommendations and examples of good practice from OGP members – features chapters on access to justice, justice for accountability, and open justice.



**Partners:** OGP collaborates with many partners on justice reforms, including the [Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies](#), [Open Society Justice Initiative](#), [World Justice Project](#), and [the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](#).

## POLITICAL FINANCE

Half of Western Balkans countries have not yet made an OGP commitment related to political finance. However, Croatia and Serbia have each made ambitious commitments in this area, and Croatia’s most recent commitment achieved strong early results.

● = made at least one commitment

★ = achieved strong early results

	OGP Commitment?	Most recent commitment in this area
Albania		
Bosnia and Herzegovina		
Croatia	★	Political Finance Transparency ( <a href="#">2018</a> )
Kosovo	●	Transparency of Political Party Financing ( <a href="#">2023</a> )
Montenegro		
North Macedonia	●	Digitalization of Political Finance Reporting ( <a href="#">2024</a> )
Serbia	●	Law on Financing Political Activities ( <a href="#">2014</a> )

## COMMITMENT EXAMPLES



**CSOs Improving Accountability in Croatia:** Croatia worked on increasing transparency of political party and election financing through commitments in its second and third action plans. Using the information provided in the database of election campaign reports, CSOs developed a searchable database of contributions and expenses reported by parties and provided





their own analysis of key observed trends and issues. The database allows search and comparison of donors, campaign expenses, media discounts, and social media campaign expenses.



**Political Finance Transparency in Panama:** As part of its 2015 action plan, Panama committed to publishing detailed information on public financing of political parties no later than six months after the end of each electoral period. Panama’s Electoral Tribunal created a public database that is searchable by year and shows all funding granted to political parties from the electoral authority, along with the use for the funding. The database is user-friendly, allowing information to be downloaded in an open format, and regularly updated.

## RELATED RESOURCES



**[Broken Links: Open Data to Advance Accountability and Combat Corruption](#)**

(2022) offers an overview of the state of open data against political corruption in OGP countries and includes a chapter on political finance data.



**Partners:** OGP collaborates with many partners on political integrity reforms, including [Access Info Europe](#), [Global Data Barometer](#), [Transparency International](#), and the [International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance](#).

## OPEN PARLIAMENT

Most Western Balkans countries have OGP commitment(s) related to Open Parliament. North Macedonia’s 2024-2026 action plan had three commitments related to open parliament.

● = made at least one commitment

★ = achieved strong early results

	OGP Commitment?	Most recent commitment in this area
<b>Albania</b>	★	Improving Parliamentary Information Openness ( <a href="#">2023</a> )
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>		
<b>Croatia</b>	★	Education on Parliamentary Engagement ( <a href="#">2022</a> )
<b>Montenegro</b>	●	Improving Digital Accessibility Standards and Transparency of Local Parliaments ( <a href="#">2022</a> )
<b>North Macedonia</b>	●	Assembly Television, Register of Regulatory Bodies, and Parliamentary Caravan ( <a href="#">2024</a> )
<b>Serbia</b>	●	Web Modernization for the National Assembly ( <a href="#">2023</a> )

